

Dr. James Charlton House (Odd Fellows Hall)
Main Street
Alexandria
Huntingdon County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5398

HABS
PA,
31-ALEX;
9-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

DR. JAMES CHARLTON HOUSE
(Odd Fellows Hall)

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PA,
31-ALEX,
9-

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Location: The Dr. James Charlton House is located on the northeast corner of Main and Bridge streets, Alexandria, Porter Township, Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania.

Present Owner: Philip J. Lukish.

Present Use: Multi-family dwelling.

Significance: The Dr. James Charlton House is one of the few structures remaining in Alexandria that was used as a formal meeting hall for the activities of a social organization. The Odd Fellows were an active group during the second half of the nineteenth century, indicated by the building's location at a prominent Main Street intersection. The structure was later converted into the home of William Phillips, a prominent Alexandria merchant.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: ca. 1831.
2. Original and subsequent owners: Lot No. 29 containing the structure fronts 60' on Main Street, and extends north 200' to an alley; Bridge Street borders on the west; a brick residence and lot borders on the east.

The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands. Reference is to the Recorder of Deeds Office of the County of Huntingdon, Pennsylvania.

1822 From Lazarus McLain's estate to John McLain.

1831 John McLain's heirs to Dr. James Charlton and his widow, Nancy Charlton; according to the former's will, the property subsequently went to Samuel Charlton (in 1832), although tax records show that Nancy paid the taxes for the brick house on this lot in 1834 (Harshbarger, 19).

1848 Deed November 6, 1848, recorded in Volume G2, Page 297.
Samuel J. Charlton
TO
Dr. Daniel Houtz.

1848 Deed December 11, 1848, recorded in Volume G2, Page 296.
Dr. Daniel Houtz
TO

Nathaniel Watkins, Charles Huey, and Henry Grafuis (Trustees of Sons of Temperance and I.O.O.F.).

- 1848 Deed December 11, 1848, recorded in Volume Q2, Page 477.
Nathaniel Watkins, Charles Huey, and Henry Grafuis (Trustees of Sons of Temperance and I.O.O.F.).
TO
Jacob Baker, et al.
- 1858 Deed January 10, 1858, recorded in Volume Q2, Page 475.
John W. Given, Robert Laird, and John Whittaker (Trustees of Alexandria Division 134, the Sons of Temperance of Pennsylvania)
TO
Jacob Baker, Jacob Bellman and Dr. Daniel Houtz (Trustees of Hartslog Lodge No. 286, I.O.O.F.).
- 1863 Deed March 6, 1863, recorded in Volume Q2, Page 478.
Jacob Baker, Jacob Bellman, Joseph Becker (Trustees for Hartslog Lodge No. 28, I.O.O.F.)
TO
William Phillips.
- 1917 Deed February 17, 1917, recorded in Volume C6, Page 190.
Kepler Beck (Clerk of Orphans Court for William Phillips)
TO
John Phillips.
- 1917 Deed October 25, 1917, recorded in Volume E6, Page 79.
John Phillips
TO
Samuel Neff.
- 1943 Deed May 3, 1943, recorded in Volume B8, Page 413.
Ella M. McMahon et al. (F. and R. Lauder, N. Neff and G.I. Phillips)
TO
G.I. Phillips.
- 1952 Deed March 19, 1952, recorded in Volume B8, Page 413.
G.I. and Frances Phillips
TO
George Irwin and Francis Phillips.
- 1952-76 Various owners used the building as a dwelling as well as Phillip's Fly and Tackle Company.
- 1976 Deed September 1, 1976, recorded in Volume 132, Page 695.

Wayne and Madalyn Talasky
TO
Philip J. Lukish.

3. Original plans and construction: No original plans or drawings have been located. According to an 1880-90 photograph, a Victorian porch with double columns and a wooden balustrade was located on the front facade, at least in the southwest corner, and possibly extending the full length of the south facade.
 4. Alterations and additions: According to tax records, the north end of the ell has been extended approximately 15'; a carport further increases this extension northward.
- B. Historical Context: Harts Log Lodge No. 286, of the International Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.), was instituted in Alexandria on January 15, 1848. That November, Dr. Daniel Houtz purchased the lot on the corner of Bridge and Main streets from Samuel Charlton, to serve as the lodge site. Other minor social groups existed at the time, the largest being the Sons of Temperance, with whom the I.O.O.F. shared their lodge until 1858.
- A "secret society" of men, the I.O.O.F. numbered ninety members prior to the Civil War. During the War, however, that number fell to sixteen. In 1863 the hall was sold to William Phillips, and within a year the I.O.O.F. relinquished its charter.
- In 1872 the lodge was reinstituted, and by 1881 it had twenty-eight members. (Africa, 430). Deeds indicate the lodge may have been relocated to a structure near the corner of Hartslog and Main streets, but no specific site has been determined.
- William M. Phillips, of York, Pennsylvania, arrived in Alexandria as a teenager in 1846. By 1862 he was engaged in merchandising in what was known at that time as the Charlton Building (Africa, 427). In 1850 Phillips, age 25, is identified in the census as a grocer. In 1870 the census includes a William Phillips, 44, who was a dry-goods merchant possessing \$12,000 in real estate, and \$2,000 personal funds; in 1880 he again appears as a dry-goods merchant. In 1866 Phillips erected a brick store with an attached dwelling (Harshbarger, 57). He was a citizen as well as leading merchant in the county, having served on several occasions as school secretary and treasurer, as well as town burgess (Africa, 431).

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This Federal-style L-plan building is an unusual design, with off-center hall and entry highlighted by an ogee arch, as well as its general large size.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Main block is 60' x 22'; the ell extends north about 38'.
2. Foundation: Rough-cut stone.
3. Wall construction: Brick.
4. Structural system, framing: Load-bearing brick.
5. Porches: The front door has a concrete landing with three treads approaching from the west; a modern iron balustrade borders the east and south edges. The rear, "interior" facades feature a full, wrapped wood porch with first- and second-story decks, decorated supports, balustrades, an exterior stairway, and bracketed eaves.
6. Chimneys: The main block features interior double brick chimneys on the gable ends; the north wall of the ell's gable includes a single interior brick chimney.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The single wooden front door features a recessed-panel decoration; it is set a deep 7" into the framing, which includes an ornamental transom and flanking sidelights underneath dramatic ogee-arch framing. The two doors on the west wall are also deeply set into their sills and are topped by a one-light transom.
 - b. Windows: All windows have been modernized to feature one-over-one-light synthetic sash; originally they were six-over-six-light wood sash. The front and side facades have nineteen such windows; there are several more on the rear facades. Two quarter-circle windows flank the west-end chimney.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Side-gabled with asphalt shingles.
 - b. Cornice: Wood box cornice beneath rain gutter.

- C. Site: The James Charlton House sits on the northeast corner of Main and Bridge streets, historically a busy intersection. Across the street, on the south, is the former store whose owner occupied this structure. Diagonally to the southwest is a brick structure that also served as a store. Across Bridge Street and to the east are residences.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Old views (in Hartslog Heritage, 34 and 47).
The Alexandria museum has a late 1880s photograph in its collection.

- B. Primary and unpublished sources:

Porter Township tax records, 1819 to 1859, Huntingdon County Historical Society.

Alexandria Borough tax records, 1859 to 1873, Huntingdon County Historical Society and Huntingdon County Courthouse.

Huntingdon County Deed Books and Probate Records, Huntingdon County Courthouse, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania.

Huntingdon County Tax Map -- Alexandria, 01-02-51.

Huntingdon County Historical Society survey sheets.

- C. Secondary and published sources:

Africa, J. Simpson. History of Huntingdon and Blair Counties, Pennsylvania. Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1883.

Harshbarger, Jean P., Nancy R. Taylor, Sara H. Zabriskie, and F.R. Zabriskie. Hartslog Heritage. State College, Pennsylvania: K-B Offset Printing, Inc.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was conducted by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record in cooperation with the America's Industrial Heritage Project under the directorship of Randy Cooley; AIHP is an undertaking of the National Park Service, based in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania. Recorded under the direction of Robert J. Kapsch, chief of HABS/HAER, the project was completed during summer 1988 at the HABS field office in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Project leader was Alison K. Hoagland, senior HABS historian; field supervisor was Dorothy Burlingame, University of Vermont; project historian, Karen Genskow, Sangamon State University. Large-format photography is by David Ames. Editing of the final report was done by Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.

This report was completed as part of a larger project documenting two canal towns--Saltsburg, on the Western Division of the Pennsylvania Mainline Canal, and Alexandria, on the Juniata Division--flanking the Allegheny Divide. Twenty-one reports on other buildings in Alexandria, an overview history of Alexandria (HABS No. PA-5407), and of canal town development in Pennsylvania (HABS No. PA-5666) are part of the HABS/HAER collection. Twenty-two reports on buildings in Saltsburg (Indiana County) and an overview history of Saltsburg (HABS No. PA-5438) are also available. Results of the project were published as Two Historic Pennsylvania Canal Towns: Alexandria and Saltsburg, Sara Amy Leach, editor (Washington, DC: Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service, March 1989).